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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS:

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger  
Secretary of State

Joseph J. Sisco  
Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern  
and South Asian Affairs

Arthur W. Hummel  
Acting Assistant Secretary for East Asian  
and Pacific Affairs

Winston Lord  
Director of Planning and Coordination

Ambassador Huang Chen  
Chief of PRC Liaison Office

Han Hsu  
PRC Liaison Office

Chi Chao Chu  
Interpreter, PRC Liaison Office

DATE AND TIME: Thursday, October 25, 1973  
4:45 p.m.-5:25 p.m.

Amb Huang: You were up all night.

Secretary: Your allies tried to throw their weight around last night. I thought I would bring you up to date on what has been happening for the benefit of the Prime Minister.

First, let me tell you about the situation last night and today, and then I'll go back to the Moscow trip. First, Mr. Ambassador, our policy has been what I told you the first night. We

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have one principal objective, to keep the Soviet military presence out of the Middle East and to reduce the Soviet political influence as much as possible. I know you are going to disagree with these objectives violently. (Laughter)

Amb Huang: Not necessarily.

Secretary: But we will pursue them regardless of your recommendations.

Amb Huang: I watched your entire TV press conference today.

Secretary: (To Mr. Sisco) The Prime Minister says I am the only man who can speak a half an hour without saying anything.

I was not offended by what he said, simply that he gave away my secret.

Amb Huang: You are very much interested in these words of the Prime Minister, and Chiao Kuan-hwa also told you how the Prime Minister explained them.

Secretary: Let's go through yesterday. We received in the morning some Soviet complaints that the ceasefire was being violated. We believed them and, therefore, we brought very great pressure on Israel to stop what they were doing. But then we found out that Israel was not doing anything. We also found out that the Egyptians were not doing anything, that it was a rather quiet day. All day long the complaints were getting louder and louder in a way that we couldn't do anything about.

At four o'clock I saw Dobrynin, and he discussed with me only the question of how we get the political negotiations started. At the end, we discussed what would happen at the Security Council, and he said the only instructions to their representatives were to vote for the resolution about the ceasefire. At 7:30, Dobrynin called me and said they had changed instructions now and would vote for the resolution introduced by somebody

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else that the Soviet and American forces be introduced into the Middle East. We told them we would veto such a resolution. You remember we called you and recommended that you might consider vetoing, too.

At 10:15 we received a message from the Soviet Union which was very brutal in language and which, in effect, said that we should immediately agree to send a joint force with them into the Middle East, and if we didn't agree to send a joint force with them, they would send Soviet forces alone. We were not prepared to send a joint force with the Soviet Union because of the impression of condominium, because our objectives were not the same as theirs, and because we did not want to establish the principle that Soviet combat forces could be transported over long distances into foreign countries.

So I called the Soviet Ambassador and told him he would get an answer later, and I called a meeting of the National Security Council. That is when we put our military forces on the alert. We moved our fleet to the eastern part of the Mediterranean and put another aircraft carrier into the western part of the Mediterranean. And only after we were sure that the Soviets would have picked up all these movements did we send them a reply, in which we said we were prepared to send individual observers, but not combat personnel, only as part of the UN observer force. But if the Soviet Union would act unilaterally, it would have the gravest consequences and would violate the principles we signed and violate Article II of the Treaty for the Prevention of Nuclear War. I know you won't like me to invoke that treaty. So we used the treaty as I told the Prime Minister we would use it. And we also told the Soviet Ambassador that we would not receive any other communication until we had replied to this one.

So at the United Nations today you know what happened. We refused to join any resolution unless it excluded permanent members from any force. So now the Soviet Union is excluded from sending a force except as part of the United

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Nations. About one and one-half hours ago we received a reply from the Soviets that they were sending 70 individual observers and no military contingents.

Amb Huang: That would mean that you will also send individual observers?

Secretary: Maybe, but we haven't decided yet. Our major concern was that they had alerted 7 of their 8 airborne divisions. (To Sisco) Was it 7 out of 8 or 6 out of 7?

Mr. Sisco: I think it was 7 out of 8 but I'm not sure.

Secretary: They had assembled all their air transportation to move them. We are not concerned with individual personnel in Egypt -- they have been there before -- but we were determined to resist introduction of combat units.

Now about our strategy. As far as the discussions in Moscow were concerned, they dealt only with the Middle East and only with the Security Council resolution. There was no other subject. I don't think their affection for you has increased in recent months, but it was not a subject they pursued. Our major concern was that, since they were defeated, not to push matters to the point where it would produce a military confrontation.

Amb Huang: Who was defeated?

Secretary: Basically, the Egyptians were defeated and, therefore, so were the Russians. We weren't asking for a ceasefire. We will now pursue the policy I discussed with the Vice Foreign Minister of strengthening our relations with Arab countries. I am considering stopping in a few Arab countries, specifically including Cairo, on the way to Peking. And I wanted to ask you whether it might be possible for you if we entered China the way I did on my first trip through Pakistan. I thought I would go from Cairo to Teheran to Rawalpindi to see President Bhutto and go up to Peking from there. (There was some discussion among the Chinese.) You will have to ask your government. Or maybe we could come around that area and go to Shanghai.

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Amb Huang: We will report this to our government and tell you very quickly.

Secretary: Of course. We think this is an opportune moment to visit those countries and it fits in with the general views expressed by Chiao Kuan-hua when I last saw him. And it will be in the spirit that we discussed that I would be making those stops.

This is what I wanted to inform you of and, of course, answer any questions you might have.

Amb Huang: Thank you for the information about this. We will report this immediately to Prime Minister Chou En-lai. I would like to ask from your point of view what you estimate the developing situation in the Middle East to be.

Secretary: My honest view is that the Soviet Union has suffered a major strategic defeat, and that's why they tried to bluff us last night. For the third time now its friends have lost most of the equipment the Soviet Union gave them. Even the Arab leaders have had to learn that they can get military equipment from the Soviet Union, but if they want to make diplomatic progress, they have to deal with us. And since we are not anti-Arab we will help them now make diplomatic progress. So we now have a very good position to reduce the Soviet political influence.

This is our assessment of the outcome. They will bluff us from time to time and make some threatening noises, but their nerves are not as good as their bluffs.

Amb Huang: What are the United States and the Soviet Union planning to do in the future?

Secretary: There will be formal cooperation between the Soviet Union and us to encourage negotiations. The Soviet Union will try to create the impression that they pushed us into it. But since the Soviet Union can deliver nothing, we will have our bilateral discussions with the Arabs as well. You must distinguish appearance from reality. There may be some face-saving things, but we will determine

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for ourselves what will be done. You know the Western concern with face.

Amb Huang: The Orientals are very much concerned with face, with self-respect.

Very honestly speaking, I would like to say that the practice of the United States and the Soviet Union that they were doing during the Security Council meetings of the 22nd and 23rd, of putting in a resolution agreed upon by themselves, but not letting other countries consult or receive instructions from their governments, is a practice we find intolerable. And Vice Minister Chiao Kuan-hua made that quite clear in the Security Council. At the Security Council meeting, others didn't even want him to finish his speech.

Secretary: I hope our representative didn't bring any pressure on you.

Amb Huang: But practically both the U.S. and the Soviet Union pushed the resolution in the Security Council without giving time to the other members to consult or to ask instructions from their governments.

Secretary: I agree with you. This was an exceptional circumstance in which the Egyptian forces would have been completely wiped out if the war continued another 24 hours.

Amb Huang: I don't agree with that estimate. From the very beginning our views were different on this point. The U.S. said at the very beginning that in 72 to 96 hours the Arabs would be defeated.

Secretary: I underestimated.

Amb Huang: It went on for 16 or 17 days, and as Chiao Kuan-hua has made very clear, it was a big victory for the Arabs. It was not the six-day war of 1967. On this point we differ. I do not wish to go further.

Secretary: We have different public assessments, but we still have to have realistic private assessments. I underestimated the length of time, but I did not underestimate the outcome.

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Amb Huang: But there is a fundamental difference of assessments here. We look at the perspective of which side is just and which side is not just. Also, we consider that, while weapons are important, people who use the weapons are even more important.

You can see that the Arab peoples have, during the past several decades, suffered humiliations, ever since the British trusteeship of Palestine in 1947. And in the creation of Israel there were two states -- one in Palestine and one in Israel -- with the support of the big powers on the 5th of June 1948. On the second day, Israel launched attacks on the Arab states and the Arabs in the Palestinian area, about one million, were driven out homeless. And for these several decades the Palestinians and Arabs are without their homes and have to live in refugee camps. After the war in 1967, our Arab friends felt humiliated. That was why the Arab people suffered so much in the 1967 war. The Soviet Union gave them weapons, but they did not let them use them. The purpose was to control them. Under the circumstances, of course, the Arab people could not have their concerns met. Under the provocation of Israel, the Arabs fight back, as the Vice Minister made clear in his speech at the Security Council. He pointed out that the Arabs fought very heroically, and they victoriously hoisted the Egyptian flag east of the Suez. And on the Golan Heights it was not so easy for Israel; the Syrians put up a very firm struggle. Mr. Dayan claimed that the Israeli forces would take Damascus, but they did not. And the Palestinian Arabs, too, put up a heroic struggle. Other Arab countries and peoples participated in the battle. And the unity and strength of the people have increased. I'm not very clear on the present situation.

There is strength in the situation of the Arab people. At this or that time, there may be military setbacks, but I do not share your assessment that they have been defeated. We are firmly convinced that the side of justice will finish with victory. So long as territories are not restored and so long as the legitimate rights of the Palestinian Arabs have not been

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resolved, there cannot be peace. Regarding what the U.S. and the Soviet Union did, I am frankly expressing my views. In the end, the Arabs will certainly be victorious.

Secretary: We are not anti-Arab. Our principal objective is to prevent Soviet influence, as I told you on the first day. We take very seriously what the Vice Minister said in New York. You will see that we will pursue a very active policy toward the Arabs. I agree with you that they have wiped out the humiliation of the past years, and they fought very heroically.

Amb Huang: I just wanted to say these things, and then I won't go on any longer. We are old friends. We have differences of view, but we are old friends. And you do know that we do sympathize with the just cause of the Arab people.

Secretary: We are not asking you to abandon this.

Amb Huang: And as we said in the past, we are not against the Jewish people; we are opposed to Zionism and Zionist aggression. That's what the Arabs say, too.

And what is more, I myself being a soldier, I don't believe the theory that weapons decide everything. Because if the weapons were more decisive, then the Chinese revolution would never have been victorious. And George Washington would never have been victorious. And many others, too.

Secretary: And Winston Lord would be deprived of all hope of taking over the State Department.

Mr. Ambassador, our present plan is to leave here on the 5th or 6th of November and then go to Cairo and then into China. If you could let us know at your convenience whether we can come in via Pakistan, it would be a sentimental journey.  
(Laughter)

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Amb Huang: I will immediately report this.

Secretary: Of course, I will be happy to go into greater detail with the Prime Minister when I am there.

(As the Chinese were moving toward the door)  
You will not disagree with what we did last night, Mr. Ambassador. (Laughter) I don't want you to get too nervous.

Amb Huang: We will report this immediately. I personally think that this (travel to Arab countries) would be a good idea.

(The Secretary then went over parts of the itinerary, adding Saudi Arabia as an example of another country that he might visit.)

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